

EFL students' Divergence from L1 Norms, and Convergence on L2 Norms in terms of their Multicultural Personality Traits*

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I . Introduction

Second language learners' association with the new concepts in the language initiates new conceptual construction in the learners. He gradually modifies and enriches the concepts constructed via his 1st language by adding new semantic features to them and consequently to his own conceptual perception of the world and life. The impact of language on perception and thought proposed by Sapir and his student Whorf attributed new and strong characteristics to language (Anderson & Lighfoot, 2002). Furthermore, the interactional hypothesis introduced the idea of identity

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being constructed through linguistic interactions. Therefore, a new language learning and finally mastering it provides the necessary grounds for language learners' conceptual and personality development in the real of their new language.

Language and culture, the contents of everyone's personality and identity, are so intertwined that their separation is almost impossible. Studies on L2 learning also support the idea that language learning is concomitant with cultural acquisition (Norton, 2010). Language, culture, and identity are three sides of a triangle within which individuals exercise their social beings. Identities cannot be materialized in isolation from contextual elements and negotiations (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). Therefore, L2 learning brings about an opportunity for L2 learners to enrich their personality. L2 learning is accompanied by some degree of cultural absorption that can alter L2 learners' personality.

The world of monolinguals is all spent inside the Platonic Cave; whereas, bilinguals have had the possibility to experience, wishfully, the world out of The Cave, and probably more realistically speaking, the world inside another a little bit different cave. Bilingual EFL students are more engaged with mental challenges to fully understand both their L1C and L2C values systems and contexts. In fact, they straddle not only two languages but also two cultural worlds, L1C and L2C. They have developed an ability to have one eye on their L1C and the other on their L2C.

Learning a new language, e.g. English as a Foreign Language (EFL), and successfully advancing toward postgraduate studies, provides high frequency exposure to the new language's culture that can result in Second Culture Acquisition (SCA) (Hamers & Blanc, 2000). Studies on L2 learning with an interest on its cultural aspects support the understanding that language learning is concomitant with some degree of cultural acquisition (Fogle, 2007; Hinkel, 2006) because language of a community

cannot be detached from its culture. Eglin (2000, 27) asserts, "Language and culture are inseparable." Agar (1994 cited in Risager 2006, 112) states that "culture is in language and language is loaded with culture." The seamless bound between culture and language creates a unified body; therefore, it will be very difficult to have cases of L2 learning without L2 culture instilling itself into the mind of L2 learners and consequently altering their valorization base and behaviour.

The fast and vast growing EFL programs all over the world are going to bring about a new generation of bilingual and bicultural people. These bilinguals and biculturals, in every specific community, good or bad, to some extent, will be different from their monolingual and monocultural counterparts. Bilinguals will inevitably be bicultural and behave accordingly in their monolingual and monocultural community. They will assume a partially different personality from their monolingually nurtured counterparts.

Individual personality is a dynamic and developmental phenomenon that gradually, in the course of life, expands its scope, gains intensity and maturity. Monolinguals' cultural identity is constructed in their monolingual environment within which there exists only a monolithic cultural world. Within this monoculture context, their "culture is transmitted, shaped, and maintained through [a single] language and dialogue" (Hymes, 1974, cited in Finnan & Swanson, 2000: 67). But EFL students are provided with an opportunity of being exposed to a new cultural world that has the potentiality of altering and developing different personality traits compared with their monolingual counterparts' personality traits. Studies on EFL students' personality change under the influence of their associations with EFL necessarily requires being specific to every nation. Since Iranian EFL students' personality compared with monolingual Persian language students' personality has not been investigate, this study attempted to explore their

cultural divergence and convergence in terms of multicultural personality traits.

II. Review of literature

Human life on the Earth is time and place-bound, and since every geographical location at every specific time has its own local and temporal culture; therefore, mankind is also culture-bound. Culture comprising certain specific values and common social knowledge is applied to every aspect of life by means of language. Hall (2008) maintains that language is not merely the scene of manifestation for culture, but also the means for its materialization. Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz (1997) assert “social identity” is “in large part established and maintained through language” (p. 7). Therefore, language and culture create a unitary system within which individuals’ identities, i.e. their social beings, are molded and exercised (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). Risager (2006) asserts that culture is both “personal and relational”. It is personal because it is one’s own belonging and it is relational because it is not quite independent of its surrounding. Culture is defined in a relational stance with its contextual elements which include the interlocutors and all the elements in the context, including time, place, objectives, conventions, and the conventional status of the interlocutors. Kasper and Omori (2010) believe that “context and [social] behaviour” are so integrated that any attempts to explain interlocutors’ socio-verbal behaviour with “the separation of context and behaviour collapses” (470).

Language of every speech community sets a pattern and confines a frame for its members to think accordingly and within. Speakers of every language are at the “mercy” of their language i.e. linguistic determinism

(Barker & Galasinski, 2001; Ishtla, 1999). Jones and Wareing (1999) assert that language can “manufacture an ideology which would steer the way people think.” Language both reflects and partially affects its speakers’ worldviews. It is the main means to perceive the realities around in a certain specific form and consequently attributes certain specific meanings to them which summed up builds its speakers’ language–moulded personalities. At the same time, language provides the required means to present concepts, intentions and ideas. Therefore, in every aspect of human mental activities, i.e. perception and conceptualization and production of meanings in an externally manifestable form, language is the main means and active agent that plays its own deterministic role as well.

Members of every speech community by means of speaking a specific common language develop common concepts, association, affinity, and belongingness that construct their collective social Identity (Riley, 2008). Weedon (2004) in his detailed survey of the bonds between language, culture and identity states, “a common language is often assumed to signify a common culture and identity” (20). Bucholtz and Hall (2004) assert, “identities are forged in action rather than fixed in categories” (376). In fact, the language one speaks and the identity assumes or constructs are merged in each other (Spolsky, 2004). Therefore, it is quite logical to assume for bilingual EFL students some personality features, to some extent, different from their monolingual counterparts’ and similar to their L2 native speakers’ personality features.

Bilinguality is defined as possessing two linguistic systems and capability of applying them to run the daily social affairs. Although it is defined as a linguistic subject, it has social, affective, cognitive, and even political dimensions. Hamers and Blanc (2004) believe that bilinguality has consequential effects on individual’s psychological feelings in terms of self–identity, perception and culture. Feng (2008) has defined biculturality

as “internalizing two value systems, beliefs and behavioral norms of two social or cultural groups and the skills to function in both cultures” (p. 284). Feng has identified bicultural individuals as “two people” in one. Kanno (2003) believes that bilinguals are “necessarily bicultural” as well.

The three main functions that language serves, i.e. communicative, cognitive, and socializing functions (Hamers & Blanc, 2004) are twice exercised in the life of bilinguals. Therefore, it can be concluded that not only are bilinguals’ communicative means two folds but also their cognitive faculty and social capability. Doughty and Long (2005) have given more importance to the cognitive aspect of bilinguality; whereas, Paulston (1992, cited in Feng, 2008) attributes more credit to the affective aspect of biculturalism than to its cognitive aspect and she believes that bilinguality without biculturality is possible; whereas, the reverse is not. Bilinguality materialized without biculturality can just be a linguistic bilinguality because *perfect* bilinguality cannot be accomplished independently from the accompanying biculturality. Biculturality and bilinguality are not independent from each other and each one’s perfect materialization is fully dependent on the other’s materialization (Hamers & Blanc, 2004).

II. i . Acculturation and bilinguality

The first definition of acculturation, presented by Redfield, Linton and Herskovits (1936), states that “acculturation comprehends those phenomena, which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come onto continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups” (cited in Van der Vijver, 2004, p. 216). Individuals’ adapting their cultural values with the “mainstream culture”, i.e. they give up their own native culture and replace it with the second language culture is referred to as subtractive

bilingualism or acculturation. Subtractive acculturation/assimilation cannot be satisfactory and convincing to self-value-praising individuals. It is more likely to create resistance if not resentment in the educationally mature L2 learners. Furthermore, in subtractive bilinguality, L2 is socially and officially valorized as the prestigious and more dignified form. In such a sociolinguistic context, L1 gradually undergoes erosion and L2 is boosted (Hamers, 2004). A subtractive bilingual social and educational context is supported neither by sociologists nor by pedagogues, for the reason that “two-way bilingual educational programs” have proved to yield better “academic results” than monolingual educational programs (Lambert, 2003 cited in Hamers, 2004).

Bilinguals in bidimensional version of acculturation preserve their own culture while at the same time also gain the ability to recognize, respect and apply appropriately the second culture's values and parameters. It is believed that this type of acculturation can lead to the development of a “bicultural identity” in which L2 learners keep and remain loyal and faithful to their own native culture and also “establish good relations with the host culture” (Van der Vijver, 2004, p. 217). This type of acculturation is equal to what is commonly known as additive bilingualism.

Berry and Sam (1997, cited in Van der Vijver, 2004) and Berry (2003, cited in Chiriboga, 2004) have proposed a four-category classification of bidimensional type of acculturation. Their classification is based on two questions with four possibilities based on the answers provided: Integration, Separation, Assimilation, and Marginalization of which only the first case, i.e. integration can result in perfect biculturality. (See Table 1)

1. Do I want to maintain good relations with my culture of origin?
2. Do I want to establish good relations with the host culture?

Table 1: Strategies taken in bidimensional model of acculturation

Possibilities	Q1	Q2	Results
1	Yes	Yes	Integration
2	Yes	No	Separation
3	No	Yes	Assimilation
4	No	No	Marginalization

Mono-dimensional subtractive acculturation, advocated by culturally hegemonic states, is designed to immerse novice L2 learners into the target language cultural pot and melt them down in the new cultural values. In this approach, culture is taken to be a subject, like other subjects taught at schools that can be taught “in isolation of the social context” (Monzo & Rueda, 2006, p. 189). But acculturation, from a sociocultural perspective and within discursive/constructionist approach, is “a complex, dynamic and interactive process” and those engaged in the process are given the credit of being “active agents” defining and playing their own social roles (p. 188).

Acculturation is not a “static end result” but rather a “process” (Chiriboga, 2004). Individuals are identified in the type and quality of the interactions they establish between themselves and the context in which they are living. Cultural identities are gained in the interactions between the old and the new values within the context in which the participants are believed to be active and determining agents. Culture is embodied in people, their socio-cultural environment and the interactions they participate in. Reduction of culture to the level of a subject and teaching its state-sponsored version in the participants will not yield the anticipated results (Monzo & Rueda, 2006).

II. ii . Biculturality

Bicultural individuals, from the cognitive point of view, have been recognized as “cognitively and mentally healthier than those who are monocultural or those who are assimilated or acculturated into mainstream culture” (Rashid, 1984; Rogler, Cortes, & Malgady, 1991, cited in Feng, 2008, p. 285). Harumi (2002) believes that experiences with other cultures will result in the acknowledgement of “the existence of other viewpoints and” and this type of bicultural individuals will “consequently look at their own culture objectively” (p. 42). Bilinguals are believed to use “innovative hybrid forms” in their social interactions and therefore construct “hybrid identities and values” (Duff, 2010a, p. 446). Biculturals’ developed identity is “a complimentary” to their original identity. Bilinguals are believed “to develop an increased capacity for abstraction” by means of “compound mapping” of forms and functions in both L1 and L2 (Hamers, 2004). Therefore, bilinguals’ “linguistic environment” is richer than the monolingual ones’ and it will provide better conditions for cognitive exercises and developments. Benet–Martinez, Lee, and Leu (2006) studying on Chinese–American bilingual biculturals and Anglo–American monoculturals found that “exposure to more than one culture increases individuals’ ability to detect, process, and organize everyday cultural meaning” (P. 386). Genc and Baba (2005) in a research on the effect of teaching C2 alongside L2 found that cultural understanding of an L2 community could help L2 learners to overcome the limitations of a “monocultural perspective.” Trueba and Zou (1994, in Kim, 2003) conducting a research on identity and L2 learning in China found that “Learning a second language and a new culture did not in any way detract from but in fact, enhanced their pride in their identity and … affiliation to their ethnic group” (P. 13).

II.iii. Convergence and Divergence

L2 learners, especially the adults who are more conscious of their L2 and C2 learning, based on various psychological, personal, and social variables may decide to either converge on their C2 or diverge from their C1. The choice of selection between these two alternatives is based on individual's identity preference derived from his value-attributing system. Identity preference is not a permanent characteristic, but rather an ever-changing dynamic entity, which is under constant modification. It is a tendency derived from and driven by one's psychological perspective of his self-ego and the aspirations sought. The identity modification is monitored by value-attributing system, which is constructed through the course of socializations in the daily life (Kim's 2003).

The process of modifying one's speech, both in terms of form and content, to suit the context in which one happens to be performing is known as accommodation. This convergence towards the contextual norms gradually establishes itself as the normal pattern of verbal behaviour, which would be manifestations of one's identity. It is the presumed and preferred identity that monitors one's identity-constructing process and behaviours and the verbal dimension of one's behaviour is the most outstanding element in this regard. Based on the presumed and preferred identity one might choose to identify himself different from a certain speech community; therefore, under such circumstances he will manage to behave linguistically differently from that speech community's norms and consequently exercise divergence.

Convergence on target language cultural features and socio-lingual norms or divergence from such features and norms is totally dependent upon the identity that the second language learner has decided to establish. Convergence will take several levels. It can be just a very simple effort to

recognize socio-lingual norms of the SL community. At a further level, this recognizing effort might be accompanied with respect, reverence or even praise. So this second layer of convergence deals with the amount of credit being given to the recognized socio-lingual norms and consequently the degree of the attributed credit will oblige the second language speaker to react in an appropriate manner. The third layer of convergence is the level in which SL learner would employ the SL norms and apply them in his socio-lingual behavior (Risager, 2006).

In L2 learning policies, the developmental process of recognition, credit attribution, and exercise of the SL socio-lingual norms might be hypothetically tried to be kept in imaginatively two separate and distinct paths, *social* and *lingual* and the L2 learners be given the opportunity to choose either one or both. Lingual norms, just hypothetically imagined, are pure linguistic constituents detached from their social context. Recognition of such norms or better be called rules of construction, accrediting them with linguistic values and their being employed and exercised by L2 learners might be ideal objectives of some learners and language teaching programs. But the problem with this type of L2 educational trend is that even if successfully accomplished and be kept detached from the sociocultural path's influence, which is rightfully doubted for these two aspects of any language are not detachable from each other, it can only nurture L2 learners with *partial* linguistic capability. It is said partial because the advanced level of linguistic capability is well integrated in sociocultural sphere of language and a perfect linguistic capability, beyond the elementary levels, cannot be achieved detached from sociocultural knowledge.

Ⅲ. The present study

Iranian EFL learners and practitioners' population, due to many facilitating, encouraging and necessitating factors, is on a sharp rise and the emergence of an EFL bilingual population is just a matter of time and soon a great number of the new generation will be bilinguals and to some extent bicultural in future. These EFL students' bilinguality and its consequential impacts on their personality should be of great concern and demand thorough investigations.

This study investigated Iranian EFL students' divergence from their C1 and convergence on their C2 in terms of their Multicultural Personality Traits (MPTs). Therefore, the following research questions were posed to explore the issue.

1. Do the personal cultural traits of Iranian EFL students diverge from the MA Persian language monolingual Iranian students' personal cultural traits?
2. Do bilingual Iranian EFL students' multicultural personal traits converge on native English speakers' multicultural personal traits more than monolingual Persian language students' MPTs?

Ⅲ. i . Participants

There were three groups of participants in this study.

1. 30 English native speakers
2. 92 Iranian MA EFL students
3. 80 Iranian MA Persian language monolingual students

III. i .1. English Native Speakers

30 English native students (18 male and 12 female) studying various courses at Indiana University, Indiana, the United States of America in 2011 participated in this study. Twenty-two of them were BA students and 8 of them were BA graduate.

III. i .2. Iranian MA EFL Students

The second group of participants in this study included 92 Iranian EFL MA students studying English at Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran in the fall semester of the year 2010. Twelve participants in this group who were already bilinguals in some local languages were excluded from the final list.

III. i .3. Iranian MA Persian Language Students

The last group of the participants in this study included 80 MA Persian Language speaking monolingual Iranian students majoring in Persian Language and Literature at Allameh Tabataba'i University. Since this study was to find out the effect of English language learning by Iranian EFL students by means of comparing their MPTs with their monolingual Persian language counterparts, participants in this group who were already bilinguals were excluded and 70 participants were finally left. The distribution of the participants by gender and major is presented in the following table.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of all participants

Participants	NO	Age Range	Major	Frequency	Percent			
Iranian MA EFL students Male: 32 Female: 48	80	23-40	TEFL	33	43.5			
			Literature	20	23.9			
			Translation	27	32.6			
Iranian MA Persian students Male: 33 Female: 37	70	23-54	Persian language	70	100			
			English native students Male: 18 Female: 12	30	20-28	Varied	30	100

IV. Instruments

Two instruments were used in this study to measure the required personality traits. The first was the Authentic English version of Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) developed by Van der Zee and Oudenhoven at University of Groningen in the Netherlands was used (2001) and the second was its Persian translation.

IV. i . MPQ in English

In order to assess the MPTs of all the participants, MPQ was used. An authentic copy of MPQ was received from Dr Oudenhoven. MPQ is a 91-item personality assessment questionnaire, on a 5-point likert scale, that is used to describe behavior when one is engaged in social interactions in an international context. It measures five personality features, recognized as Multicultural Personality Traits (MPTs) which are Cultural

Empathy (CE), Open-mindedness (OP), Social Initiative (SI), Emotional Stability (ES), and Flexibility (FL). It is used to identify individuals' capability of adjustment to other cultures. MPQ is used to predict how easy or difficult it is for individuals to adjust to other cultures in bicultural and multicultural environments. It tries to assess the intensity of personality traits contributing to success in culturally different contexts from one's own first language context.

IV. ii . MPQ in Persian (MPQP)

The authentic English version of MPQ had to be translated into Persian for the sake of monolingual Iranian MA Persian Language students who could not complete the English version. Persian version was pilot-administered to find out its correlation with the original English version and it was found that there was a high degree of correlation (.88) between the Persian and the English versions. Its validity and reliability was checked through the following procedure.

The researcher himself made the first version of the required translation. Then, it was reviewed and revised by an MA graduate of English Language Translation. An MA Persian language graduate had finally reviewed the revised edition and edited it. Later The revised and edited version of the translation and the original English version were evaluated by three TEFL PhD students at Allameh Tabataba'i University and three veteran EFL teachers at the English Language Department of the School of International Relations on a five-point likert scale from the least relevant to the most relevant in terms of their *content relevancy* and *language clarity*. The items that were given four or five credits by every evaluator were accepted as appropriate ones and those with a lower credit were revised. In the first stage of this crediting process, 14 items received

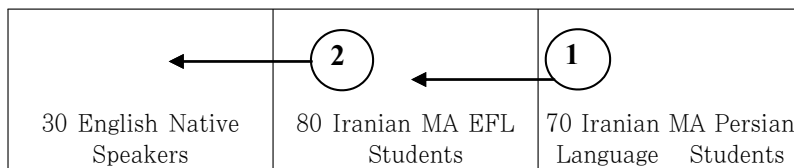
below 24 credits from the six evaluators regarding their *content relevancy* and 17 items regarding their *language clarity*. These items were rechecked for any discrepancies and retranslated and submitted to the six creditors for a new evaluation. The result of the second round of validation process revealed that 11 items could not gain credits as high as 24. These items were omitted and what was left at this stage was an 80-item MPQ.

Persian version of MPQ was finally pilot-administered at the School of International Relations. Twenty MA students, 14 male and six female took both versions of MPQ. The correlation between Persian and English version was found to be .88. The reliability of the 80-item MPQ, the English version that were finally used in this study was measured and the results found for the Alpha (α) were Multicultural Personality Traits $E = 0.89$, Cultural Empathy $E = 0.81$, Open-Mindedness $= 0.75$, Social Initiative $E = 0.87$, Emotional Stability $E = 0.87$, and Flexibility $E = 0.77$

V. Procedure

MA EFL participants' MPTs data were analyzed in comparison with Iranian MA Persian language students' MPTs, by conducting an independent-samples t -test, to find out their rate of divergence from their monolingual counterparts. Then MPTs of EFL students, Persian language students, and Native English Language speakers' were analyzed through an ANOVA to find out the EFL students relative rate of convergence on their C2.

Table 3: Convergence and divergence performed by Iranian MA EFL students



1. Divergence from Monolingual Persian language students' MPTs' norms
2. Convergence on English Native Speakers' MPTs norms

VI. Results

VI. i . Iranian MA EFL Students' Divergence

In order to find out how much Iranian MA EFL students had diverged from their C1 culture, their MPTs scores were measured and compared with MA Persian language Students' MPTs. The independent-samples *t*-test comparison of means was utilized and the following results were found.

Table 4 presents descriptive statistics of 80 MA EFL participants and 70 MA Persian language students' MPTs. The mean of MPTs of EFL students was 272.20, whereas, MPTs' mean of Persian language students was 263.87. This indicated that there was 8.33 degrees difference between these two groups.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics of EFL and Persian Students' MPTs (N= 80–70)

Groups	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Skewness		Kurtosis	
					Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
EFL Students	227	345	272.20	23.11	.579	.269	.477	.532
PL Students	196	330	263.87	25.85	-.04	.28	.39	.56

The independent sample *t*-test was utilized to examine the difference between EFL and Persian language students' MPTs. The results, as presented in the following table, indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in the scores of Multicultural Personality Traits of EFL students ($M= 272.20$, $SD= 23.11$) and Persian language students [$t(148) = 2.08$, $p \leq .05$]. The magnitude of the differences in the means was small ($\eta^2 = .02$).

Table 5: Independent-samples *t*-test of MPTs of EFL students and Persian Language students

MPTs	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances/ Equal V. assumed		t-test for Equality of Means				
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Dif.	Std.Error Dif.
MPTs	.69	.40	2.0	148	.039*	8.32	3.99

VI. ii. Iranian MA EFL Students' Convergence

Bilingual Iranian MA EFL students' converged on their C2 culture was investigated conducting one-way between-groups ANOVA on the MPTs

of EFL, Persian, and English language native speakers. On one hand, the similarity of EFL Iranian students to native speakers of English language was investigated, and on the hand hand, the difference between Persian language students and natives was investigated. If it was found that the difference between EFL students and EL natives was not significant, but the difference between Persian language students and EL natives was significant, this could prove that the convergence done by EFL students was significantly close enough to leave no possibility of difference in contrast with the Persian language students' lack of such similarities. The following tables present the descriptive statistics of these three groups.

Table 6: Descriptive statistics of MPTs of Persian language, EFL, and native students

Groups	N	MPTs Mean	SD	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min.	Max.
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Persian	70	263.87	25.85	3.09	257.71	270.04	196	330
EFL	72	273.83	25.11	2.96	267.93	279.73	218	333
Native	30	276.93	26.59	4.85	267.00	286.86	238	359

The assumption of homogeneity of variance and the Sig value (Table 6) was found to be greater than .05; therefore, the assumption of homogeneity of variance had not been violated.

Table 7: Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Variables	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Multicultural Personality Traits	.127	2	169	.88

One-way Between-groups analyses of variance were conducted. Subjects were three groups of students classified according to their familiarity with English language (group 1: MA Persian language monolingual students with least English language ability, group 2: Iranian MA EFL Students with at least eight years of EFL learning records, and group 3: English language native speakers). There was a statistically significant difference at the $p \leq 0.05$ level in MPTs scores for the three groups [$F(2,169) = 3.87, P=0.023$] (Table 7). In order to find out exactly where the differences lie, a post hoc test was performed for the three groups. The results are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: ANOVA of MPTs between and within groups

Dependent Variables		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
MPTs	Between Groups	5111.70	2	2555.85	3.87	.023*
	Within Groups	111399.71	169	659.17		

Table 9: Multiple Comparisons of MPTs between P, EFL and Native students (Tukey HSD)

Dependent Variable	(I) Course	(J) Course	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
MPTs	Persian	EFL	-9.96*	4.31	.05
		Native	-13.06*	5.60	.05
	EFL	Persian	9.96*	4.31	.05
		Native	-3.10	5.57	.84
	Native	Persian	13.06*	5.603	.05
		EFL	3.10	5.57	.84

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Finding of the post hoc test pointed to significant differences between

Persian language students and both EFL and native students. But there were no significant difference between EFL and English language native students. These findings confirmed that EFL students had gained enough MPTs to reduce the distance between themselves and English language native students, i.e. their convergence on their C2 norms was significantly more than Persian language students.

VII. Discussions

The very first context in which individuals are unconsciously nurtured is the first language, which provides a means to realize the external realities. It also confines the scope of its user to its own realm. Bilinguality provides an opportunity to open the monolithically-wrapped pages of the mind and let it be written partially anew and reconstruct personal perspectives, i.e. reconstruct the identity in a bifocal and bicultural manner. Language learners experience two types of socio-verbal contexts to nurture and nourish an enriched bicultural identity. The greater multicultural personality traits witnessed in EFL students in this study confirms the hypothesis of this study that learning a new language intensifies multicultural personality of EFL students. Therefore, it can also be concluded that language is a strong effective means in portraying a contextual foreground to construct a specific personality.

The absence of significant MPTs' differences between EFL students and English native speakers and the presence of significant difference between English native speakers and monolingual Persian language students indicated that EFL students, by means of going through English leaning, have altered their MPTs to the extent that they have partially minimized the gap between themselves and native speakers of English, i.e. EFL

students both diverged from their C1 and converged on their C2 more than Persian language students. EFL students had distanced themselves from their monolingual Persian language counterparts and had reduced the gap between themselves and their English language native counterparts. Therefore, it is not a far-fetched idea to conclude that learning a new/foreign language helps reduce the cultural gap between the natives and L2 practitioners and conclude that the commonality of means of communications can bring about greater mutual understandings among people.

Bilingual EFL students are more engaged with mental challenges to fully understand both their C1 and C2 values systems and contexts. In fact, they straddle not only two languages but also two cultural worlds, C1 and C2. They have developed an ability to have one eye on their C1 and the other on their C2. Therefore, MA EFL students who were found in this study to possess higher MPTs were found to be more apt to function in multicultural environment.

It sounds logical to state that MA EFL students' higher MPTs is because of their bilinguality and deeper understanding of their C1 and C2. This bifocal capability has helped them to develop a broader inclusive perspective. Therefore, language learning results in expanding the scope of the view of its practitioners to be more inclusive and tolerant of differences and varieties. Therefore, it can help bring about a more harmonious human community at the global level.

VIII. Conclusion

The tendency to harmonize with the contextual features in the world of language is a natural phenomenon and it is quite ubiquitous among all

members of every speech community and the existence of local dialects and accents are witnesses to this claim. Every individual grows up to sound like his closest linguistic associates, i.e. first-class family members and to a lesser degree like his speech community members. Then there is the high possibility that the speakers of a single speech community will have similarity not only of linguistic features but also of cultural foundations and behaviours as well.

Second language learners do their bests to master every aspect of their L2 and be competent as much as a native speaker. There are lots of conscious efforts put to work by L2 learners, but great deals of L2 features are acquired unconsciously. A similar situation does exist for second language cultural aspects. Learning a new language is always accompanied by exposure to its culture that initiates a process in the unconscious sphere of the mind to bring about some cultural changes in the second language learner in the course of his L2 learning. The findings of this study confirm the fact that cultural acquisition, even if not intended to be nurtured, will be materialized. Language learning and cultural acquisition are always running abreast and the prior's leaning materializes the latter's existence. Therefore, bilinguality, and in a greater scale multilinguality can reduce the difference among peoples.

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Abstract

EFL students' Divergence from L1 Norms, and Convergence on L2 Norms in terms of their Multicultural Personality Traits

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The present study explored the impact of EFL learning on Iranian MA EFL students' Multicultural Personality Traits (MPTs) development. Divergence from L1 norms, and convergence on L2 norms were investigated by means of utilizing Multicultural Personality Questionnaire that measures cultural empathy, open-mindedness, social initiative, emotional stability, and flexibility. Thirty native speakers of English, 92 Iranian MA EFL, and 80 MA Persian language students participated in this study. MPTs of monolingual Persian language students and English language native students were used as reference for L1 and L2 norms. The findings revealed that Iranian MA EFL students, compared with their monolingual Persian language counterparts, had developed significantly greater MPTs and drawn closer to their L2 norms than Persian language students. The findings supported the idea that L2 learning and some cultural acquisitions are collateral and the bilinguality achieved in L2 learning is always concomitant with biculturality that yields a higher degree of multiculturalism in EFL students. Findings were also confirmatory of the fact that the commonality of means of communications nurtures similarity in personality features and bilinguality results in the reduction of the difference between speech communities.

Key Words: Bilinguality, Biculturalism, Convergence, Divergence,
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이중언어성, 이중문화성, 수렴, 발산, 성격특성

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